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*thetech.com*

The Tech
Established 1881

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Thursday, September 19, 2019

**WEATHER, p. 2**
THU: 65°F | 53°F
Sunny.
FRI: 79°F | 64°F
Sunny.
SAT: 78°F | 63°F
Sunny.

# Epstein ties debated at faculty meeting

## *Faculty response mixed, includes both criticism and defense of admin.*

**By Ronak Roy**

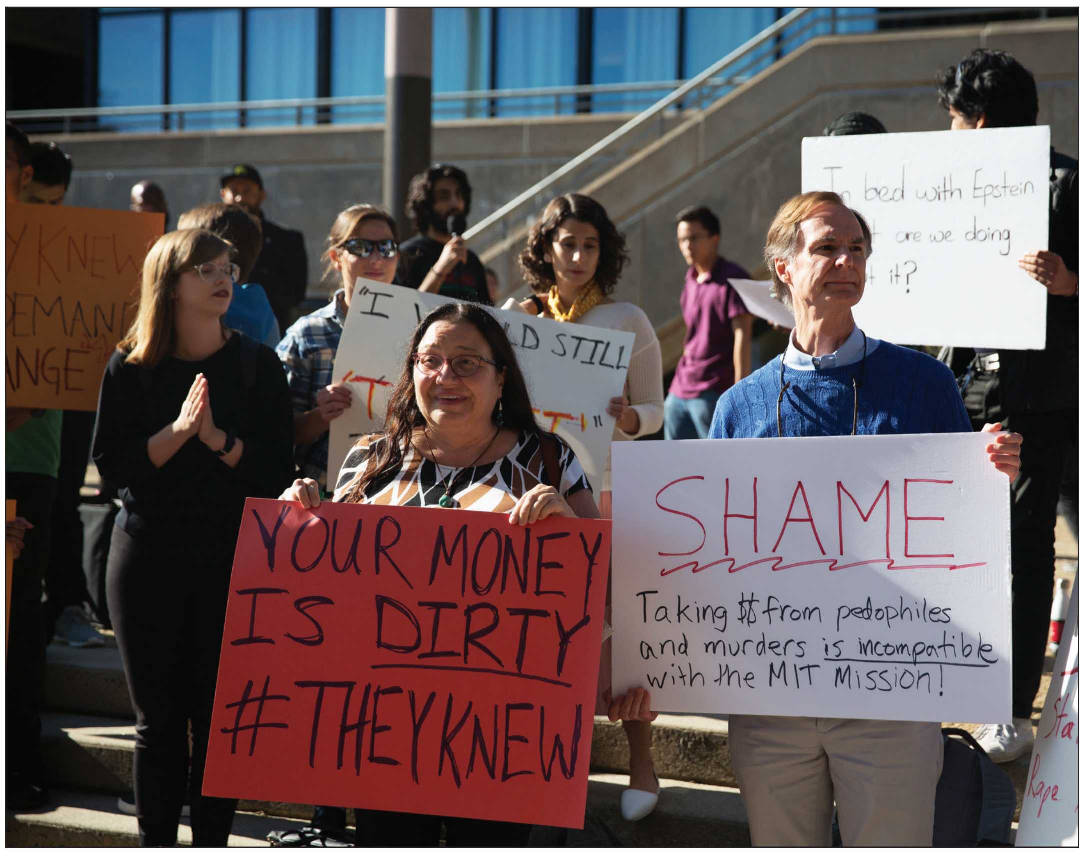
President L. Rafael Reif gave updates regarding Jeffrey Epstein's ties with MIT at the first faculty meeting of the year Sept. 18. Faculty members' sentiments towards those involved in the acceptance of Epstein's donations ranged from extremely critical to sympathetic.

Due to the fact that Reif has been heading the discussion on the relationship between Epstein and the Institute, Faculty Chair Rick Danheiser led the meeting. "Like many students and colleagues," Danheiser began, "I felt profound shame on learning about Jeffrey Epstein and the Institute." Danheiser expressed that he found it unacceptable that "the evil man Jeffrey Epstein" donated to the Institute, hoping to use his contributions and MIT's reputation for his personal gain.

Following Danheiser's introduction, Reif delivered opening remarks in which he repeated information previously released in his four emails since September and expressed his regret and sense of personal responsibility for the matters.

"Over the last few weeks, our whole community has experienced deep pain, sadness, and disappointment," Reif said to the audience of faculty, student leaders, and other guests. "Many of you have expressed those feelings to me directly. I know that many of you are angry about the whole situation. I know many of you are angry at me. But I will not presume that I know or understand how all of you are feeling or how you have experienced these events. Learning more about that is a central goal of this meeting. I do know that this is a

**Epstein,** Page 2


YOUR MONEY IS DIRTY #THEYKNEW
SHAME
Taking $$ from pedophiles and murders is incompatible with the MIT Mission!
In bed with Epstein
are we doing
it?

KEVIN CHEN—THE TECH

**Members of the MIT and greater Boston community** assemble Friday at the #TheyKnew protest, organized by MIT Students Against War in response to the Epstein scandal.

# More than 200 people protest Epstein's relationship with MIT

## *'Research funded by rape, war, or oil is not worth it,' sign says*

**By Kristina Chen**

Students, researchers, faculty, and other members of the MIT community gathered at the steps of the Stratton Student Center Sept. 13 to protest the donations Jeffrey Epstein, the late financier accused of sex trafficking, made to MIT. The protesters criticized the administration for its lack of transparency regarding these donations and its involvement with figures such as Epstein and Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has been accused of human rights violations.

The protest was organized by MIT Students Against War (MIT-SAW), headed by members Husayn Karimi '19, Mani Mengiste G, and Alonso Espinosa-Domínguez '20, and included speakers such as Quinton Zondervan from the Cambridge City Council, Chelsea Hodgkins from UnKoch My Campus, and MIT students in the Media Lab and CSAIL. Karimi also read aloud a statement sent by Signe Swenson, the whistleblower and former development associate at the Media Lab who first revealed the extent of Epstein's donations, who was unable to attend the protest.

In an interview with *The Tech*, Mengiste said that the protest likely saw a turnout of more than 200 people overall, with many coming and going during the two hour demonstration.

Participants held signs reading "Accountability not avoidance," "Research funded by rape, war, or oil is not worth it," and "I apparently think Reif must resign." The sign referenced an email sent by President L. Rafael Reif to the MIT community, in which he stated that he "apparently signed this letter [thanking Epstein for a donation] on August 16, 2012," and while he does "not recall it, it does bear [his] signature."

Between speeches given by the speakers, Karimi led the crowd in call-and-response chants such as "Reif, Reif, you can't hide. We demand that you resign."

After the program of scheduled speakers ended, members of the crowd were also invited to speak in an open mic session, and about thirty minutes later, the protest culminated with a march to Reif's office, where protesters delivered their signs and continued to voice their dissatisfaction with the Institute's administration.

With the tagline "#THEY KNEW," the protest was publicized by MIT-SAW through emails and flyers posted and distributed around campus. The flyers prompted community members to "speak out against MIT + Epstein scandal."

The main goal of the protest, Mengiste told *The Tech*, was "to give a voice to serve the MIT community, and to give us a chance to respond to the events that have unfolded for the past three weeks." She described these events as "symptomatic of a bigger problem … the fact that there's no transparency with which the Institute handles donations."

Addressing the crowd, Karimi outlined the demands made by MIT-SAW to the administration. First, he

**#TheyKnew,** Page 3

# Stallman resigns from MIT after comments about Minsky scandal

## *Stallman denies defending Epstein, apologizes for the misunderstanding*

**By Shreya Karpoor**

Richard Stallman, computer scientist and open software advocate, resigned Sept. 16 from his positions as visiting scientist at CSAIL and as president and board director of the Free Software Foundation. His resignation was "due to pressure on MIT and me over a series of misunderstandings and mischaracterizations" regarding an email he sent to the CSAIL community mailing list Sept. 12 about the Jeffrey Epstein case, Stallman wrote in a blog post on his website.

Virginia Giuffre previously accused Jeffrey Epstein, the late financier, of directing her to have sex with AI pioneer and MIT professor Marvin Minsky. In Stallman's original email, he wrote, "All I know she [Giuffre] said about Minsky is that Epstein directed her to have sex with Minsky. That does not say whether Minsky knew that she was coerced."

Stallman continued, "We can imagine many scenarios, but the most plausible scenario is that she presented herself to him as entirely willing." Stallman also questioned whether or not Minsky's behavior should be characterized as "sexual assault," which he described as a "slippery" term.

Following this email, Selam Jie Gano '18 called for Stallman's removal in a blog post published Sept. 12. "I know, now, that if prominent technology institutions won't start firing their problematic men left right and center, we will do nothing. Ever," Gano wrote. "Long before this incident, Stallman was contributing to an uncomfortable environment for women at MIT in a very real and visceral way."

Mani Mengiste G, an organizer of the MIT Students Against War rally that took place Sept. 13 protesting the Media Lab's ties to Jeffrey Epstein, said in an interview with *The Tech*, "It feels like there are members of the community that hold very disturbing views about women, and it's very difficult [for women] to carry on with their day-to-day work knowing that they are right next door to someone who carries those very disturbing views."

Stallman sent a follow-up email to the CSAIL community Sept. 14, saying that the media coverage misunderstood him. "Headlines say that I defended Epstein. Nothing could be further from the truth," Stallman wrote. "I'm sorry for that hurt. I wish I could have prevented the misunderstanding."

Stallman did not respond to a request for comment from *The Tech*.

*Kristina Chen contributed reporting.*

## IN SHORT

**Final exam schedules** have been posted on https://finalexams.mit.edu/.

The **Fall Career Fair** is on Sept. 20. The fair opens at 9:30 a.m. for first years and volunteers and 10 a.m. for the general MIT community. It will end at 4 p.m.

**Minor completion date** is Sept. 20. Minor completion forms for final-term seniors are also due.

MIT's first **blood drive** of the year will be from Monday, Sept. 23 to Thursday, Sept. 26 in the Stratton Student Center.

Interested in **joining The Tech**? Stop by for dinner Sunday at 6 p.m. or email join@tech.mit.edu.

**Send news and tips to *news@tech.mit.edu.***

### READ THE BOOK INSTEAD

Though beautiful, *The Goldfinch* tries to do too much. **ARTS, p. 10**

### DEAR PRESIDENT REIF

In light of the Epstein revelations, MIT needs a leader. **OPINION, p. 7**

### CLIMATE (IN)ACTION

The failures of our environmental plans. **OPINION, p. 5**

### ANOTHER SPACE ENDEAVOR

Brad Pitt's journey to Neptune underwhelms. **ARTS, p. 10**

### TWO DEATHS, TWO RESPONSES

Our campus needs a broader discussion about donations. **OPINION, p. 4**

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WEATHER

# Bright and sunny weekend!

**By Megan Xu and Sarah Weidman**

*STAFF METEOROLOGISTS*

It has been cooling down this past week! After a hot summer, it was a relief to have some cooler weather and some hints of fall. This weekend, however, will be a return to the heat and the sun. There is a high pressure sitting over the Northeast currently, resulting in clear and dry weather. Expect sun all weekend and temperatures to rise, potentially hitting the low 80s on Sunday. Remember to wear sunscreen if you spend time outside over the long weekend!

Elsewhere in the country, coastal regions are experiencing the middle of hurricane / tropical storm season. Tropical Depression Imelda is currently hovering over eastern Texas, dumping heavy rain over the region. This could cause serious flooding over the next few days. Another potential hurricane (Tropical Storm Jerry at time of writing) is moving towards the Carribean. Current storm tracks project that it might skim some of the islands, including Puerto Rico, but it looks unlikely to hit the mainland US.

### Extended Forecast

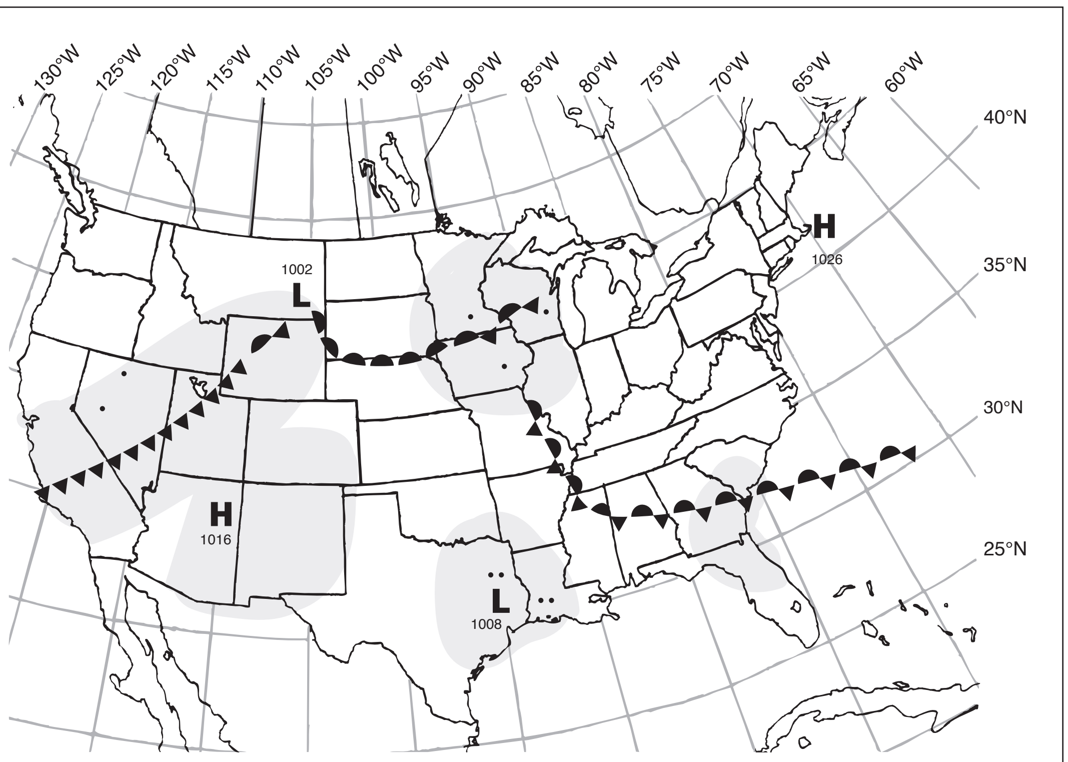
**Today:** Sunny. High around 65 °F (18 °C). North to east wind around 7–12 mph.

**Tonight:** Clear. Low around 53 °F (12 °C). Southeast winds around 5–10 mph.

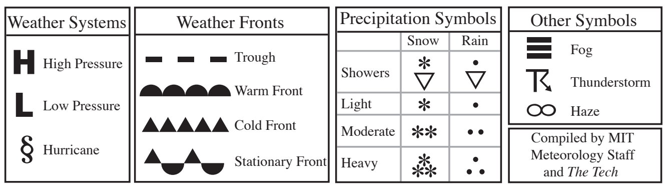
**Friday:** Sunny. High around 79 °F (26 °C) and low around 62 °F (17 °C). West winds around 5–10 mph.

**Saturday:** Sunny. High around 78 °F (26 °C) and low around 62 °F (17 °C). Northwest to east winds around 5–10 mph.

**Sunday:** Sunny. High around 81 °F (27 °C).



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, September 19, 2019



Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and *The Tech*

# Institute criticized for operating like a 'for-profit' organization

**Epstein,** from Page 1

disorienting time for all of us at the Institute."

In response to questions regarding his lack of memory or opposition to signing a letter thanking Epstein, Reif said, "I did not recognize the name, and I sign many standard thank you letters every week." Reif also said that, while many found him "trying to distance [himself] from responsibility," it was "the opposite of what [he] had intended."

Reif concluded his remarks by outlining the next steps that the Institute was planning to take. He referenced the administration's efforts to work with Violence Prevention and Response to "identify appropriate charities that serve victims of sexual abuse, like Jeffrey Epstein's young victims." Provost Martin A. Schmidt PhD '88 then discussed the formation of a group to review and improve the processes for accepting future donations.

Before the meeting opened up for questions and comments, Mark DiVincenzo, vice president and general counsel, provided updates regarding the "fact-finding process" being undertaken by Goodwin Procter. It was clarified that the independent investigation was ordered by the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation. At its completion, Goodwin Procter's findings will be delivered to the committee and to Reif. Release of any details to other members of the MIT community is at the discretion of Reif and subject to the approval of the committee.

Faculty opinion regarding the ties between Epstein and the Institute, the fact-finding process, and other related matters was mixed. Comments ranged from scathing indictments of administration to vehement defense of their actions.

Professor of Anthropology Heather Paxson and Professor of Comparative Media Studies and Science, Technology, and Society Lisa Parks delivered a letter written by 30 tenured female members of the faculty and signed by over 60. In their remarks expressing shame at the Institute's actions and at the faculty who violated policies and Institute values by taking money from and inviting Epstein to campus, the authors noted that the investigation was primarily concerned with the policy failures and the financial aspects. The authors wrote, "We also strongly believe that the significant gender and sexual implications of the MIT-Epstein relationship must not be lost."

Professor of Biology Angelika Amon directly called out Reif and senior leadership, saying, "In my view, President Reif, the buck stops with you. In my view, the only way forward … is for you to accept responsibility and for you to resign your position."

In response to Amon's comments, Reif asked her to "please reserve that judgement" until the fact-finding report is released.

The idea that the ties highlighted a larger, cultural problem present in the Institute was recurring throughout the meeting. Leigh Royden PhD '82, professor of earth, atmospheric, and planetary science, said that in her 35 years at MIT, she had observed numerous examples of "usually powerful faculty … exhibiting uncollegial behavior" against vulnerable members of the faculty. Royden also said she is a victim of childood sexual abuse.

Alexander H. Slocum '82, professor of mechanical engineering, also said he was a victim of childhood sexual assault. He choked up while reading his poem imploring the MIT community to come together and grow while calling for the establishment of an Office of Moral Guidance.

Professor of Physics and Women & Gender Studies Edmund Bertschinger said, regarding the ethical focus of the new MIT Schwarzman College of Computing: "We want our students to take ethics classes, but what about our leaders?"

Professor of Philosophy Kieran Setiya urged the administration to "take a greater view of what it means for MIT to be a moral institution," mentioning donations by the late David Koch, an industry tycoon who actively fought against climate science research.

In an extensive analysis of the causes of the ties with Epstein, former Faculty Chair Susan S. Silbey criticized what she believed to be the Institute operating like a for-profit organization by balancing profits and expenses, promoting "mechanical thinking," and "devaluing social knowledge and expertise." These cultural flaws, Silbey argued, are the reason that "we really can't be surprised when a registered sex offender is celebrated" for his philanthropic contributions.

Professor of Mathematics Giulia Saccà expressed her fear of the present misogyny in MIT's culture, saying that she now questions the respect given to her and other female faculty by their male colleagues.

Some faculty members delivered more pointed critiques. W. Craig Carter, professor of material science and engineering, called the invitation of Epstein to campus and within "not two hundred yards of a childcare center," an "act of almost criminal responsibility," when some MIT students were the same age as Epstein's victims.

However, not all faculty members were critical of the administration or the faculty involved. Director of the Center for Transportation and Logistics Yossi Sheffi said, "Nothing illegal was done by MIT." He went on to argue that in the context of academic research institutions, anyone would take money from any source in order to pay the members of a research lab, challenging the faculty in the room to work for free.

Members of the faculty presented proposals to prevent future incidents like the Epstein scandal. The group called for the creation of an "ad-hoc committee on protecting academic integrity, to draft a statement on MIT values" regarding the receipt of outside funding and donations. The group desired that this committee review existing funding relationships and develop guidelines for future donations that include compliance with state, federal, and local laws, revised restrictions on faculty conflicts of interest, protections for whistleblowers, and public notification for donations of over one hundred thousand dollars. The proposal was moved to discussion, and an official vote will occur during the October faculty meeting.

Members of the Media Lab also spoke regarding the matter. Professor Pattie Maes entreated her fellow faculty to stop referring to the situation as the "Media Lab issue," noting that two years prior to the Media Lab accepting a donation from Epstein, funds were also taken by the mechanical engineering department. Media Lab Professor Rosalind W. Picard ScD '91 called for support for victims of abuse in a letter written by a number of men and women faculty members. Picard also asked for "support from MIT in dealing with the press in times of crisis" by means of seeking corrections for news organizations that publish misinformation.

In addition to faculty, students also delivered comments at the meeting. President of the Undergraduate Association Mahi Elango '20 said, "I feel angry because I expected the best from MIT," and expressed concern that this investigation will only be limited to this situation but fail to look into broader problems in the Institute. Vice President of the Graduate Student Council Alexander Joerger G implored faculty to provide strong guidance to students' moral compasses, asking them to consider: "What does it mean to work for the betterment of humankind?"

Other faculty members raised concerns about previous close connections between MIT and the firm Goodwin Procter.

Reif concluded with the following: "There were many assumptions mentioned today. I don't blame you for the assumptions you made. I want to beg you, honest to goodness, wait a little longer."

# Literature minor has new film track this fall

## *Student interest credited for track creation*

**By Kristina Chen**

As of Fall 2019, MIT students interested in studying film can now follow the film track of the literature minor. Approved in Fall 2018 by the Committee on Curricula, the film track consists of three required subjects and three restricted electives.

Shankar Raman '86, head of the literature department, wrote in an email to *The Tech*, "The idea behind [the film minor] was to serve better those students at MIT who had evinced a desire for a structured minor more explicitly focused on close analysis of films, and emphasizing the interconnections between film analysis and literary study."

Students hoping to minor in film must take three required subjects in the literature curriculum, which span its introductory, intermediate, and seminar tiers.

Classes include 21L.011 (The Film Experience), 21L.433 (Film Styles and Genres), and 21L.706 (Studies in Film). 21L.706 "hones in on a particular topic in film study" and "functions as a capstone for [the] proposed minor track," according to an email to *The Tech* from Eugenie Brinkema, minor advisor and literature professor.

Additionally, the film track includes three restricted electives. At least one of these classes must be a complementary subject from the literature curriculum "that does not focus primarily on film but that ties into the student's interest with regards to film," Brinkema wrote. At most two of the classes, still with film analysis as the primary focus, can be taken in a section outside of literature.

These non-literature classes can comprise, but are not limited to, film-related courses in comparative media studies, anthropology, global studies and language, and women's and gender studies.

In a phone interview with *The Tech*, Brinkema said, "There are a lot of places for film at MIT. … We think that it's only a good thing for students to have a variety of disciplinary perspectives even though the foundation of it is still the film classes that literature offers in form and style and history."

Brinkema said that the new film track of the literature minor is an instance of MIT's widely-spanning media studies culture, which has grown through other departments, such as the School of Architecture and Planning's Transmedia Storytelling Initiative and the MIT Open Documentary Lab.

Brinkema also said that MIT's film track and its overall commitment to interdisciplinary education differs from other educational institutions' film programs in that it is "a lot broader and more flexible."

Brinkema credits student interest for the minor's creation. She said, "It's a very unusual thing, changing minors and adding new sections and new courses of study, … but I think the fact that MIT is particularly based on student enthusiasm is what keeps the humanities education relevant: the fact that it can adapt and organically change."

# Crowd chant: ‘Reif, Reif, you can’t hide. We demand that you resign’

**#TheyKnew,** from Page 1

said that the administration must “release all the information, release all the names of the people who accepted the money,” and that those who were aware, including Reif, must resign or be fired.

Furthermore, he proposed “a body of faculty, of staff, of students, and of community members that has final decision-making power over” donations. He also demanded that MIT no longer accept anonymous donations.

Lastly, Karimi called for the firing of Seth Lloyd, an MIT professor known to have visited Epstein in jail, prompting the protesters to chant, “Seth Lloyd has got to go.”

Nathan Foster, a protest organizer and student at Tufts University, said, “There needs to be student and faculty and community voice … or the Jeffrey Epsteins of this world will keep doing whatever they want with MIT’s resources and with MIT’s name recognition and with MIT’s power. We need to demand that that power be placed back in our hands.”

Speakers at the protest also denounced other significant donors, such as the Koch brothers for climate change denial, and Stephen A. Schwarzman for his role in the housing affordability crisis.

Mengiste told *The Tech*, “Our hope is that members of the MIT community stop and think [about] the relationship between money, who it comes from, the science that we do with it.”

Arwa Mboya G, a graduate student at the Media Lab and member of the Future of Women student group, spoke of the concerns they felt as women on campus, citing the email defending Epstein sent by visiting scholar Richard Stallman to those affiliated with CSAIL. Stallman has since resigned.

Mboya said during the protest, “I challenge MIT’s administration to dream much much bigger; it’s not about science, it’s not about technology, it’s about humanity, and if we can’t get that right, then we are not a good institution.”

After the protest, Edmund Bertschinger, a physics professor, said in an interview with *The Tech* that he was “very happy others who felt like me could share [our] feelings today in solidarity.”

# Dorms implement new rooming procedures

## *Squatting and room selection are not allowed anymore*

**By Aliza Rabinovitz**

All residence halls this year had to allow first years to remain in their temporary rooms if they did not want to move after REX (a procedure known as “squatting”), following a rooming redesign exercise done last year. In addition, upper-level students could not preference or select which new students lived in their community (a procedure known as “mutual selection”).

Mutual selection was previously part of the room assignment process in dorms including East Campus and Burton Conner.

BC President Alice Zhang ’21 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that room assignments were “made successfully with no major issues to date.” In lieu of mutual selection, the dorm used an algorithm and a “values based selection process” with questions about the type of community students wanted to be in.

EC attempted using two algorithms sequentially to place first years first based on their preferences after visiting all the halls in the dorm. However, EC President Adriana Jacobsen ’20 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the algorithms “could not generate enough results that met the requests of the students being assigned to new rooms, including cats/clothing-optional preferences.” EC decided to use its algorithm from last year for the rooming process, and is modifying the planned algorithm to make it work in the future.

In addition to eliminating mutual selection, all dorms also allowed first years to squat. In BC, first years were expected to move rooms through Floor Exploration (FLEX), but they could approach the house-team with special circumstances. According to Zhang, this “did not greatly disrupt the rooming process,” as most first years moved rooms. The system in East Campus was arranged the same way, with only two out of 117 first years choosing to remain in their temporary rooms, Jacobsen wrote.

Dorms that did not previously use mutual selection and allowed squatting did not change their processes as significantly. Lily Huo ’21, Maseeh Hall rooming assignment committee chair, wrote that the rooming process in Maseeh “has always had a very structure[d] and standardized procedure” in an email to *The Tech*. According to Huo, freshman squatting is “embedded in the rooming process,” as “freshmen can essentially squat by not participating in the housing lottery, which is optional.”

Vice President and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson wrote in an email to *The Tech*, “Anecdotally, I have heard that the room-assignment processes also went pretty smoothly overall — there were some things that worked well and some things that we need to work on, which is to be expected when implementing something new.”

According to Nelson, the administration is working on gathering “quantitative data” and “qualitative feedback” on how these new rooming procedures were implemented. Among other sources, this data will come from surveys to be sent out to students, as well as information that the dorms will provide.

“It’s too early to draw conclusions, but I am proud of what we have accomplished with students and house teams so far, and I look forward to an even better opening next year,” Nelson wrote.

Do you have a story to tell?

Can you tell a personal story in writing or in an interview?

The Tech wants to publish stories from the MIT community

Sample topics:

Experiencing discrimination at MIT

Choosing between divergent career paths

Your slice of MIT culture

Romance at MIT

Or anything else you can tell as a compelling story

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## In defense of President Reif

To the editors,

As a parent of an MIT alum, I have had more than six years to watch the Institute navigate the roiling waters of our current national politics. From that point of view, I wish to say that attempting to force the resignation of President Reif over the donations of Jeffrey Epstein would be a gross miscarriage of justice. Epstein is the bottom of the scum bucket, there can be no question about it. But evidence that Reif possessed anything more than the most precursory information about the nature of the Epstein donations to the Media Lab is insufficient to the level of proof necessary to end his tenure.

But more importantly, President Reif’s positions on so many other decisions directly affecting students have demonstrated a degree of integrity and political courage that I have found both encouraging and increasingly rare among our leaders today, political and otherwise. Epstein is gone, and much of the leadership of the Media Lab that had responsibility for the Epstein dealings have been dealt similarly appropriate consequences. But, if Reif goes, those seeking vindication will have won what can only end up being a pyrrhic victory for the future of all of those associated with MIT.

—*Joan Pence*

GUEST COLUMN

# Two donors, two deaths, two responses

*Campus attention has largely focused on MIT’s ties to Epstein. It’s time to have a broader discussion about the sources of our donations*

As we write, the story of the MIT Media Lab’s connection to Jeffrey Epstein is front page news. Not long after Epstein’s death, it transpired that our Media Lab had accepted substantial donations from or engineered by Epstein even though Epstein’s record of sex trafficking of minors, particularly underage women, was by then established in a court of law, so much so that he was marked as “disqualified” in MIT’s donor database. As the revelations mounted, Joichi Ito resigned as director of the Media Lab and as an employee of MIT, and several faculty and staff resigned in protest. On behalf of MIT, Rafael Reif issued an eloquent mea culpa, promised to donate the equivalent of what MIT had accepted from Epstein to charitable causes, and (on the day of Ito’s resignation) announced that MIT had hired a legal team to do a thorough investigation of the affair. MIT is taking this issue very seriously, as it should.

> **It was wrong to whitewash Koch’s legacy in the obituary and ignore his central role in accelerating climate change.**

While all this was happening, another major MIT donor, David Koch, alumnus and lifetime member of the MIT Corporation, passed away due to natural causes. Unlike Epstein, Koch was not involved, so far as we are aware, in any crime or major personal scandal and had given generously to MIT in support of unequivocally good causes, such as cancer research and the MIT childcare center; indeed, our cancer research center is named for him, and we all take pride in its mission and accomplishments.

Yet, without diminishing the gravity of Epstein’s despicable acts, it is important to recognize that David Koch damaged global human welfare on a massive scale and for many generations to come. With his brother Charles, he funded an extensive and highly effective disinformation campaign designed to protect the Koch industries’ core business. This endeavor has set back, perhaps catastrophically, any serious attempt to avoid the worst consequences of global warming. The existence of this campaign is well documented (see, for instance, this article in the *New York Times*) and involves, among other things, a concerted effort to misinform the public about climate science and to smear the reputations of dedicated climate scientists throughout the world. The campaign has been highly successful, judging from the rapid collapse (dating back at least to the administration of George W. Bush) of bipartisan support for measures to curb greenhouse gas emissions. As we watch the terrible consequences of climate change unfold, from the rapid demise of glaciers to mass migrations to wildfires and more intense rainstorms and hurricanes, one name remains foremost in our minds: Koch.

MIT’s response to David Koch’s passing could not have been more different from its continuing response to the Epstein revelations. In a glowing obituary published by MIT News, there is not one single mention of Koch’s organized campaign of disinformation or its devastating consequences. Such an omission is not only an affront to members of the MIT community who care deeply about climate and the environment but also carries reputational risk beyond campus, especially when a major donor is also a lifetime member of MIT’s governing board. Indeed, in a strong critique of MIT’s obituary, the *Los Angeles Times* called it, accurately enough, a whitewash.

In this case, our concern is not the philanthropy itself. In fact, the undersigned think that MIT was right to accept Koch’s donation for cancer research and a childcare center, though we must carefully examine the reputational benefits derived from donors in making such gifts. The money has been used for excellent purposes, and as a bonus, it thereby became unavailable for disinformation efforts. But it was wrong to whitewash Koch’s legacy in the obituary and ignore his central role in accelerating climate change — for integrity and credibility’s sake, we should acknowledge the ethical price we paid in accepting his money and forever being linked to his legacy.

These recent events bring to the fore the difficult and delicate question of the ethics of accepting certain donations to our mission, especially now when so much of what we do depends on such donations. On the one hand, we cannot and should not hire investigators to pry deeply into the personal lives of everyone who donates to MIT. On the other hand, we cannot accept donations from known criminals. In between these two straightforward extremes lies a gray area that we also have to deal with on a regular basis. At the moment, there seem to be few ground rules in play with decisions about whether to accept donations made behind closed doors on what appears to be an ad hoc, case-by-case basis with no meaningful input from the community. Yet every employee of MIT is a beneficiary of donations, and by turning a blind eye to the source of donations, we may be unwitting accomplices to the Epsteins and Kochs of this world. Shouldn’t we at least have a serious discussion about the framework in which MIT solicits and accepts donations?

The world is watching us, and so are our students. One group of students, Fossil Free MIT, is organizing a campaign to rid the campus of the Koch name altogether and called out MIT’s hypocrisy in its relative treatment of the Epstein scandal and the Koch obituary. Whether or not one agrees with these students’ tactics, we must be concerned with the impression made on our students in condemning one donor for personal crimes and entirely overlooking the destructive transgressions of another, especially when the latter involves disinformation and attacks on science — the very antithesis of MIT’s mission as an educational institution.

So, what should we do? MIT cannot and should not involve the community in every decision about every potential donation. But we can and should have a serious formal discussion about the ethics of accepting donations (and while we are at it, the ethics of investing) with the aim of providing at least some guidelines. The issue is complex and not amenable to simple decision trees, and it may all boil down to an uncomfortable calculus of the ethical costs and benefits of donations and investments.

We owe it to ourselves as faculty and to our students to undertake this difficult conversation, which could also set an example for other institutions with educational and charitable missions. Rafael Reif shared in a recent email that the senior administration is “assessing how best to improve our policies, processes and procedures to fully reflect MIT’s values.” We welcome and support this action but urge the administration to go one step further and include the creation of a forum in which the whole community can engage in this conversation.

*Kerry Emanuel, co-director, Lorenz Center*

*John E. Fernández, director, MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative*

*Raffaele Ferrari, chair, Program in Atmospheres, Oceans, and Climate*

*Susan Solomon, founding ex-director, MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative*

*Robert van der Hilst, department head, Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences*

## OPINION POLICY

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GUEST COLUMN

# MIT's Climate Inaction Plan

## *Despite claims of progress, MIT has little to show for its environmental record. Here's how that could change*

**By Alexandre Tuel**

Unfortunately, climate change is happening — not in the distant future of model projections — but here and now. This summer, Europe baked under an unprecedented heatwave, Boston experienced its warmest July on record, and several places in Alaska broke the 90°F mark for the first time in recorded history. In Siberia, an area the size of Belgium went up in smoke. Brazil, Bolivia, and Australia are still facing major wildfires, while record-setting Hurricane Dorian wreaked havoc on the Bahamas. Time is running out. So what is MIT doing about this existential crisis?

> **Climate change is happening — not in the distant future of model projections — but here and now.**

Sadly, MIT's environmental record has not been glorious. In the early 2000s, the time was ripe for prominent universities like MIT to engage in environmental action. While MIT's president at the time insisted on our "institutional responsibility to address the challenges of energy and the environment," the "environment" part was quickly forgotten to focus exclusively on energy in the newly-created MIT Energy Initiative (MITEI) — so as not to risk irritating generous fossil fuel companies. A few years later, the faculty-led MIT Environmental Research Council (ERC) produced a report intended to launch an effort parallel to MITEI, a "Global Environment Initiative" focusing on actual environmental problems excluded from MITEI's scope. It advocated a wide range of actions to harness the Institute's resources and engage the student body for bold action. But the report was shelved by the administration, who chose to reduce the diversity of ERC members to only two ERC faculty (neither of whom had any expertise in climate science). They produced a new, more palatable report, which conveniently overlooked much of the problem to focus on only four areas, which were much more engineering-oriented and excluded "climate."

Meanwhile, with the administration's reluctance to address the climate problem, FossilFree MIT was formed to pressure the MIT Corporation into divesting from fossil fuel companies. Its continued pressure on the MIT administration finally brought a response in the form of a campus-wide Climate Change Conversation and a corresponding committee. Numerous contributions by the community stressed the need for MIT to take a clear stand. Among the main conclusions was the idea of transforming campus into a large-scale living laboratory — the report recommended MIT should implement carbon efficiency on campus and an internal carbon pricing scheme to assess and reduce emissions. Community members advocated for a climate-focused capital campaign and new investment strategies, including divestment from fossil fuel industries.

A few months later, the administration unveiled its self-acclaimed "Climate Action Plan." Sadly, commitments were scarce and lukewarm when compared to the bold proposals in the Climate Change Conversation. On top of a clear refusal to divest, even from coal and tar sands, MIT pledged only to reduce its campus emissions 32 percent by 2030. Meanwhile Duke and Cornell were aiming at carbon neutrality by 2035, and Stanford had already successfully reduced its emissions by 68%. With the refusal to create an Ethics Advisory Council, vague promises to "activate our campus as a living lab" and "implement shadow carbon pricing," and few concrete details, this plan left us wondering where the boldness was. More shockingly, a large part of the report is devoted to lauding MITEI as the example of a successful industry partnership (for the industry, that is) and advocating a close partnership with those same industries that spend fortunes lobbying lawmakers into scrapping environmental regulations. The administration ignored many of the Climate Change Conversation Committee's propositions, choosing instead to drown the fish by "repackaging largely pre-existing programs" and calling that taking action.

Now, four years later, the outcome is as disappointing as the original plan. Despite claims of progress, not much new has been done, as is quite obvious from the administration's own recent update and an earlier 2017 report. Credit is taken for pre-existing programs and efforts, like the Center for Global Change Science or even research from EAPS faculty, alongside a few minor decorative fixes like the launch of a web portal that references articles published elsewhere. Education was a major pillar of the plan; while I applaud the launch of an Environment and Sustainability minor, MIT has at the same time cultivated deep ties with one of the most science-denying fossil fuel promoters, David Koch. Regardless of his political views, he essentially spent much of his life promoting falsehoods and undermining science, going against MIT's most essential values for his own financial benefit. Regarding action on campus, shadow carbon pricing has yet to be implemented and actual campus emissions have only decreased by 4 percent. Hardly anything is said about campus energy efficiency (which, judging from the ridiculous amount of A/C cooling in summer, would probably not amount to much). Meanwhile, MIT's investment policy is still based on the "primary goal of generating high real rates of return" with no mention of sustainability, and nothing has been said or done on divestment. MIT hasn't even discussed leading any shareholder advocacy campaigns in the climate-change-denying companies it still invests in.

Three new Low Carbon Energy Centers (out of the promised eight) have been instituted since 2015, with their classic list of fossil-fuel-championing sponsors, but to a large extent, these are a result of long-term research and industry trends that would have occurred independently of any Climate Action Plan. Furthermore, as I argued in a previous piece, the upcoming Climate Symposia will only repeat what the world already knows. They ignored many of the student body's inputs and do not constitute in any way a "broad and intensive effort."

While there is certainly merit in the administration's willingness to openly acknowledge the problem, there is a wide gap between what has been said and what has been done. Climate change and environmental degradation are social, economic, and technical problems. They are consequences of unsustainable consumption patterns supported by the large-scale deployment of cheap fossil fuels by the industry and subsidised by governments. The fact that emissions keep increasing globally clearly shows that economic growth has not been decoupled from greenhouse gas emissions. Why? First, because our dependence on fossil fuels has not been seriously tackled, in no small part due to the lobbying of the oil and gas industry. Second, because we have hidden from the problem of overconsumption in the Western world. And third, because our concrete approach to solving the climate problem has been almost exclusively technical, largely ignoring its socioeconomic aspects.

Nothing in the Climate Action Plan comes anywhere near what needs to be done to really address the "seriousness and urgency of the climate threat." Instead of leading the way, MIT's weak goals make it lag behind. And to a large extent, it's still business-as-usual here. If that's the best that one of the world's top and richest universities can do, then the plan needs to go back to the drawing board.

MIT has the brainpower and influence to be a climate leader. We need leaders to act, not react, in this climate crisis. Climate change and the environmental crisis must be embraced as a critical, existential issue for the coming century. MIT has been keen to remind us of the level of commitment it took to achieve the Apollo Project; a similar general mobilisation must be declared today to face the climate crisis.

First, it is crucial to recognize climate change as a socio-political, as much as a technological, challenge. Carbon-efficient technologies have existed for a long time, yet emissions have not decreased because those technologies are not adopted. And even if they were, we wouldn't simply engineer our way out of the problem, as seems to be a dominant view on campus right now. While there is still much progress to be made on the science and engineering side, simply promoting endless innovation is not enough: critical thinking and ethical education must play a major role. The faculty hiring process must take into account the environmental impact of their research. For instance, developments in artificial intelligence have come at an enormous environmental cost; training a medium neural network emits as much as five cars. That will force us to think ahead in our research goals: what future world do we want, and what can we do to get there?

> **It is crucial to recognize climate change as a socio-political, as much as a technological, challenge.**

MIT's strategy of partnering with industry must also be revised. Many of MIT's current industry partners and board members have been actively undermining environmental progress over the last few decades. Worse, MIT is giving them credit by associating its name with theirs. By accepting gifts from the fossil fuel industry, not engaging in any divestment, and selling its good name for the sake of raising money, does MIT have any leverage against these powerful corporations? Since they hold the purse strings, companies decide what should be done and as a consequence, much of the research increases those companies' profits without benefiting humanity at large. MIT is following, not leading. Industry partnerships should be subject to strong ethical rules, regardless of the field. Large universities should not evolve into R&D centers for the big corporations that can afford the entry price. Targeted divestment and ambitious leadership by MIT to engage with other universities on this point would send a strong message to the industry that their actions are unacceptable.

In parallel, MIT should engage in a bold environment-targeted capital campaign. Research does come at a cost. The recent Environmental Solutions Initiative (ESI) has been doing excellent work, but their lack of resources and support is blatant. The $5 million invested over five years in ESI is grossly inadequate and a mere fraction of what MITEI is raising. Money is not lacking. The College of Computing showed how fast things could move when there was enthusiasm on all sides; now, the same must be achieved to tackle the climate crisis. The campaign must be made in MIT's name and fully supported by the whole Institute rather than left exclusively to individual faculty, departments, or initiatives that do not quite have the prestige and political clout of MIT as a whole. With that money, current and new environmental research could be funded more effectively, and a system of fellowships could be put in place to attract the brightest minds. A lot could be done: MIT could become a world leader in promising and under-researched fields like soil carbon sequestration and removal, instead of helping oil companies extract yet more fossil fuels from the ground.

> **The MIT community must truly be engaged with redefining MIT's research priorities and imagining a more sustainable campus.**

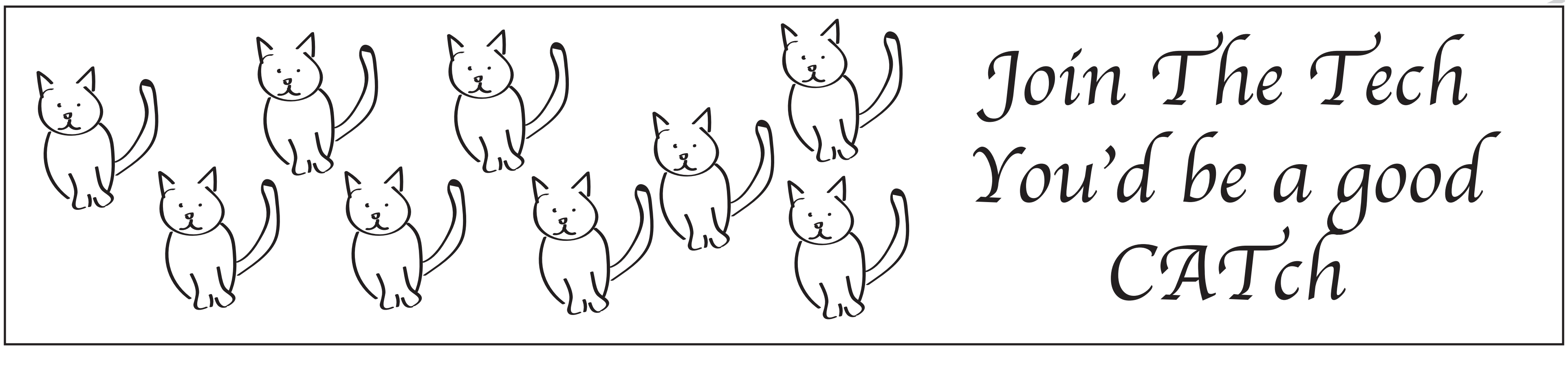
Naturally, it is vital that this change be manifest in everyday life on campus. Ambitious campus sustainability goals must be formulated and aggressively pursued. A comprehensive assessment of MIT's greenhouse gas emissions must be made. It is preposterous to claim, as has been done, that campus emissions are limited to heat and electricity production. This neglects a large portion of emissions released beyond its borders: academic air travel, commuter transportation, construction, and the purchase of food, goods, and services. For comparison, travel itself accounted for nearly 40 percent of Stanford's campus emissions. Building energy use and efficiency should be truly addressed. MIT must also commit to greening its campus energy; investing in solar in North Carolina should not come at the expense of reducing actual campus emissions. MIT recently updated its electricity plant which will keep using natural gas, when renewables are becoming cheaper every day. Like Harvard, MIT could consider geothermal energy, rooftop solar, or purchasing local renewable energy.

Finally, the MIT community must truly be engaged with redefining MIT's research priorities and imagining a more sustainable campus. Those changes will have profound impacts on everybody's life here. It is essential to go beyond online forms or forums inevitably followed by obscure committees whose recommendations are often not even followed. Students and faculty should make their voice heard, and the administration must commit to taking their opinion into account — truly.

Up to now, MIT's response to the climate crisis has been wholly inadequate, due to the leadership's unwillingness to change Institute priorities and listen to the community, as well as MIT's continued engagement with and support of companies that actively undermine environmental action. Defining a concrete climate action plan that includes achieving campus carbon neutrality within the next two decades, making climate change a top research and education priority, and developing a sustainable investment strategy, should be our top priority.

The clock is ticking.

*Alexandre Tuel is a PhD student in the department of civil and environmental engineering*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GUEST COLUMN

# Join the Global Climate Strike this Friday

## *MIT students have the opportunity to take action on climate catastrophe and help advance environmental policy*

**By Owen Leddy**

On Sept. 20, in cities around the world, thousands of people will leave their schools and workplaces and take to the streets to demand a survivable future for themselves and future generations. In Boston, the event will begin with a 10 a.m. rally at the City Hall Plaza, followed by a march to the Massachusetts Statehouse. MIT students will also hold their own rally, starting at 10:45 a.m. in front of the Stratton Student Center, followed by a march through campus. The Global Climate Strike will be a valuable chance to put pressure on our local, state, and federal governments to take action on the climate crisis and build support for even greater collective action in the future. MIT students should join the Global Climate Strike and take part in the worldwide movement that is mobilizing to combat the climate crisis.

The climate crisis demands systemic political and economic change to stop fossil fuel consumption and ecological destruction. Historical antecedents from Satyagraha in India to the Civil Rights movement to the anti-Apartheid movement show that nonviolent movements most effectively win major concessions from those in power and create transformative social change through mass non-compliance — marshaling large numbers of people to disrupt the status quo and prevent business-as-usual from continuing until unacceptable wrongs are brought to an end. Already, grassroots activism by the youth-run Sunrise Movement has made its signature demand for a Green New Deal a central point of contention on Capitol Hill, in the 2020 presidential race, and in public discourse. We can and we must achieve more.

Burning fossil fuels is mass murder. Air pollution and climate change linked to fossil fuel emissions will kill over 100 million people by 2100 and plunge over 100 million more intopoverty by 2030. The devastation of the Bahamas by Hurricane Dorian is only the most recent of many fatal disasters caused by extreme weather events that are already escalating in intensity and frequency. Demand for fossil fuels has also sparked wars worldwide, including the Gulf War and, arguably, the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. Just months ago, the U.S. came within minutes of starting a war with Iran in the name of protecting oil shipping routes. Until we reject and replace fossil fuels, the U.S. will always be just one provocation away from destroying thousands of lives to secure our energy supply.

> **The climate crisis demands systemic political and economic change to stop fossil fuel consumption and ecological destruction.**

The Green New Deal rejects the false narrative that decarbonization would necessarily harm the economy, instead seeing decarbonization as an opportunity to create jobs and redress inequality. In fact, rapid decarbonization is the only way to secure long-term prosperity for the U.S. and for the world. A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated that two degrees Celsius of global warming will cause $54 trillion worth of economic damage. A report co-authored by several U.S. federal agencies predicts a 10 percent contraction of U.S. GDP from climate change by 2100, more than twice the economic devastation of the 2008 financial crisis.

The ongoing destruction of the environment is deeply unjust. The wealthiest segment of the global population uses a disproportionate share of fossil fuels and other environmentally damaging resources, whereas the poorest people worldwide are likely to be affected far more severely by the impacts of climate catastrophe than the rich. Indigenous peoples worldwide have already witnessed the apocalyptic destruction of their natural environment and their societies by settler colonialism, and they continue to face brutal violence and outright murder when they attempt to secure their land against further theft and ecological damage.

All these facts give us a moral obligation to act.

MIT students have an exceptional opportunity to advance environmental advocacy by participating in the Global Climate Strike — and, frankly, no excuse not to. Whereas many students and workers will be risking significant repercussions if their schools or employers discipline them for missing class or work, MIT students have the day off from classes on Sept. 20, and will not be subject to these risks.

In addition to contributing to a global movement, the Climate Strike in Boston has a unique opportunity to win major policy concessions in the state of Massachusetts. Organizations like the Boston-based hub of the Sunrise Movement have been calling for a Massachusetts Green New Deal, and policy-makers have stepped up with several groundbreaking state-level bills that, if passed, would represent major steps toward decarbonizing Massachusetts. These include H.2810: An Act to Promote Green Infrastructure and Reduce Carbon Emissions (a carbon pricing bill), H.2836: An Act Re-Powering Massachusetts with 100 Percent Renewable Energy (setting a 2045 deadline for energy sector decarbonization), and H.826: An Act relative to Environmental Justice. The Climate Strike is a perfect chance to demonstrate public support for these measures and put pressure on state lawmakers to pass them as soon as possible.

> **The Climate Strike is a perfect chance to demonstrate public support for these measures and put pressure on state lawmakers to pass them as soon as possible.**

On Friday, Sept. 20, I will be joining the strikers, raising my voice to demand action. I believe my voice will matter, but only because I will be surrounded by others who are doing the same, demonstrating our collective will to hold local, state, and national governments accountable for addressing the climate emergency and the ongoing destruction of our biosphere.

I hope you'll be there with me.

*Owen Leddy is a first year Ph.D. student in Biological Engineering at MIT.*

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GUEST COLUMN

# A call for radical transparency over MIT's relationship to Epstein

## *The administration has an obligation to release all documents related to Epstein and provide answers to lingering questions*

**By Jeff Brown**

Last Thursday, President Reif admitted that he was personally aware of Epstein's donations and was present at several discussions about them. He also revealed that his high-level staff allowed an ongoing relationship with the registered sex offender while hiding it from public view. As the investigation continues, the MIT community deserves prompt and radical transparency for all Epstein documents, especially those collected from Reif's office.

Some voices are calling for Reif's immediate resignation. Reif's staff knew of Epstein's crimes and knew that a public connection with Epstein would be unsavory yet concluded that ongoing secret dealings with the sexual predator were fine. Other entities, like Harvard, apparently stopped accepting donations upon the sex crime conviction. MIT continued accepting them. Those decisions, under Reif's leadership, have embarrassed MIT and have advanced the stereotype of the morally flexible scientist. The proper response, say some voices, is for Reif to immediately accept full responsibility and resign.

> **As the investigation continues, the MIT community deserves prompt and radical transparency for all Epstein documents, especially those collected from Reif's office.**

Other voices say that the president's job has many facets, of which donor policy is a minuscule part. Reif signed a letter to Epstein, but how many other letters had he signed that week? Does he even read what he signs? He attends numerous meetings; could he have the perception, context, and memory to catch every potential problem from a thousand potential sources? He cannot possibly track every decision by every staff member.

Questions linger about the investigation itself. Reif's decision to hire outside counsel is commendable, but it only occurred after high-profile media stories. Perhaps it should have begun earlier, upon Epstein's arrest, given his known links to MIT (such as his long-known association with Professor Marvin Minsky). Why did the otherwise-communicative Reif remain silent until journalists uncovered the story? His high-level staff were aware of a multi-year Epstein connection, yet they began no public investigation or discussion until media pressure compelled it.

The Reif-Epstein matter will remain swirled in controversy and conjecture until MIT makes a transparent release of all emails, documents, and minutes related to Epstein. Confidence in MIT's leadership is a true public good; the raw evidence — not just carefully-worded summaries — should be provided to all, not confined to a private committee. The documents uncovered by Goodwin Procter should be hosted on MIT's website. This is an excellent opportunity for MIT to display its commitment to open data, moral leadership, and transparency. We are a data-driven community; give us the raw data.

> **This is an excellent opportunity for MIT to display its commitment to open data, moral leadership, and transparency.**

Whether Reif should resign is not yet clear. It is possible that a few rogue staff members acted alone and in secret, their decisions undisclosed to Reif or other senior staff. It is possible that Reif was too busy or distracted to oversee donor management and to supervise the culture among his high-level staff. MIT should release unredacted data and let the community digest it. Secrecy got MIT into this mess. Let us reject secrecy now and bring everything into the light.

*Jeff Brown is an alumnus of the class of 1999 (SB) and 2000 (MEng).*

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GUEST COLUMN

# Why I am #ClimateStriking instead of attending the career fair

*Our planet is in a climate emergency. We don't have time for career schmoozing*

**By Kevin Li**

On Friday, Sept. 20, a peculiar ritual will come to MIT. Hundreds of the world's most powerful corporations will flock to our ice rink, basketball courts, and indoor track, handing out T-shirts and water bottles and fancy bottle openers and meaningless trifles. They are after our résumés, after our endless hard work, after our human capital.

This arrangement is good for me, the world says. It is a way to start my career, they say. Behind the cheap swag, each of these companies dangles the promise of fulfillment, of money, of security.

> **The current climate and ecological crisis calls for nothing short of rebellion.**

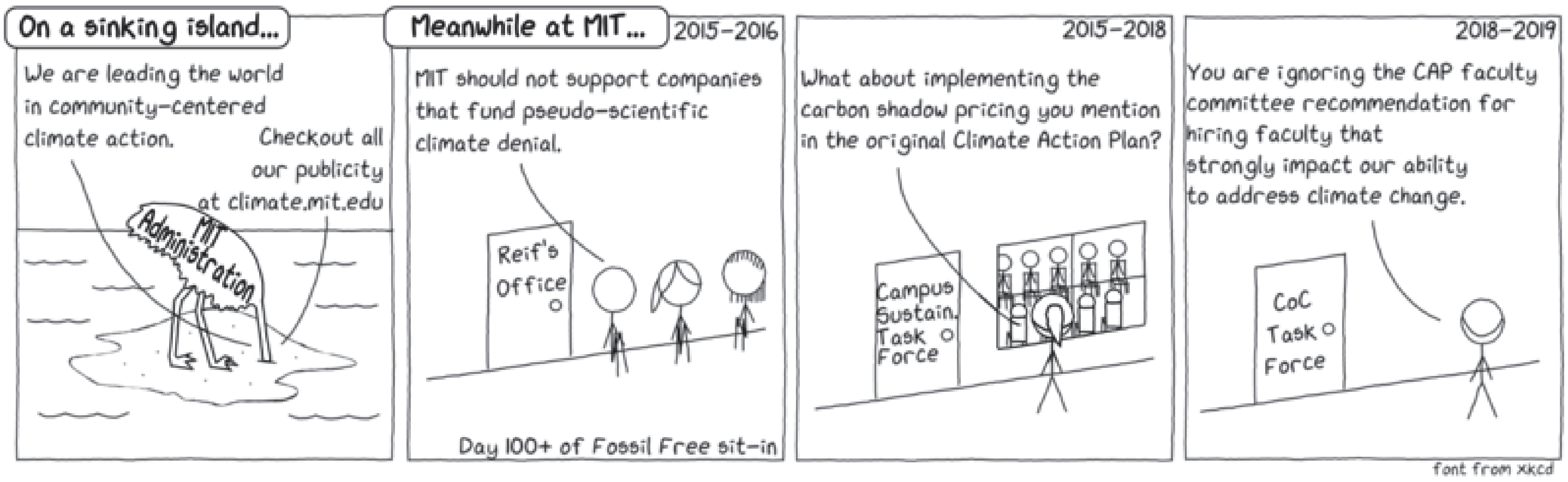
For any other generation before ours, perhaps that was the way to go — to invest in our futures. But for us, a climate emergency looms: our future has been stolen, and there will be none to invest in. Our children will ask us, why were you so obsessed with that job offer when you knew what was to come? Why were you sitting on the sidelines? Why didn't you do something?

The current climate and ecological crisis calls for nothing short of rebellion. The least I can do is to take a stand against those stealing my future, our future, and the future of humanity. That is why, on Sept. 20, instead of ingratiating myself before institutions of exploitation and extraction, I will be participating in the global #ClimateStrike. The MIT strike will begin at 10:45 a.m. on the steps of the Student Center, but you can find a strike anywhere across the globe near you at globalclimatestrike.net.

I hope to see you there.

*Kevin Li is a master's student in city planning at MIT and a member of Extinction Rebellion Massachusetts.*

## Climate inaction


On a sinking island...
We are leading the world in community-centered climate action.
Checkout all our publicity at climate.mit.edu
MIT Administration
Meanwhile at MIT...
2015–2016
MIT should not support companies that fund pseudo-scientific climate denial.
Reif's Office
Day 100+ of Fossil Free sit-in
2015–2018
What about implementing the carbon shadow pricing you mention in the original Climate Action Plan?
Campus Sustain. Task Force
2018–2019
You are ignoring the CAP faculty committee recommendation for hiring faculty that strongly impact our ability to address climate change.
CoC Task Force
font from xkcd

*MARK GOLDMAN–THE TECH*

OPEN LETTER

# A call to step up in response to Reif's most recent letter

*MIT needs strong leadership from its members and administrators in light of the recent Media Lab scandal*

Dear Rafael,

In the spirit of Mind, Hand, and Heart, we as proud members of the MIT community were astounded to read your words: "I apparently signed this letter on August 16, 2012, about six weeks into my presidency. Although I do not recall it, it does bear my signature." These words do not encompass the moral authority that we have entrusted in you as our president and provost of MIT. For the sake of academic, moral, and business integrity, you can set a better example. MIT has always set the highest standard, and thus we do not take signatures lightly on engineering drawings or business contracts; your signature is not exempt. In addition, we have a $16.4 billion endowment fund, so it is absurd to flirt with questionable sources. These decisions include, but are certainly not limited to, the acceptance of research funding from Saudia Arabia and from Jeffrey Epstein. Because both events are not singular in nature, we cannot treat them as outliers in how MIT decides to conduct its business, but more so as a reflection of moral absence. We tried to hide it. We keep saying we know what ethics means, but MIT never actually spends the time and effort to conduct meaningful leadership and ethics training that corporate America, the military, and everyone else does on a regular basis (on a mandatory level and more than just during the on-boarding process).

We need to better address the current situation from a leadership perspective. We appreciate you hiring a third-party source; however, fact-finding is not the main issue for our community. Perception is reality. Whether or not we know for sure exactly what happened doesn't matter. What matters is refocusing our culture, and there are specific ways of doing so such as having all of us come together to discuss, heal, and learn as a community. This effort requires a champion from the top.

> **This is a critical time that should be handled with care (e.g. mandatory discussions, case studies, student involvement, professor involvement), not just a legal investigation.**

Joi's failures are ripe opportunities for lessons learned that should be shared openly and taken to heart by the rest of the community. Joi should come back to lead the discussion to dive deep into the issues; "I resign" is simply not enough. This is a critical time that should be handled with care (e.g. mandatory discussions, case studies, student involvement, professor involvement), not just a legal investigation. Imagine a video made by you addressing the nuances, lessons learned, and reinstating of core values. Better yet, imagine a massive MIT-wide gathering in Killian Court of circles of students and faculty debating on what holds the most importance in making science impactful. Imagine faculty digging into the hard questions and being made accountable to their peers and students, since the professors are the premier cultural leaders of MIT. These conversations need to happen personally and locally; these are lessons that need to hit home and cannot be shoved under the rug in favor of fighting media fires, conducting a legal investigation, securing funding, or publishing a paper. That all can wait. An "all-stop" called by Rafael Reif would be a wake-up call for our community to look within, and for professors to take ownership of leading their students in a deep-dive in what it means to be a researcher, academic, and operator in the wider world. We need this "stop" in the whirlwind we've found ourselves in, to find our direction again.

I hope you recognize that this is not a separate problem of Joi's failures but a reflection on the wider culture at MIT. The current culture has reduced the importance of academic integrity and personal ethics in favor of rankings, volume of research papers, and fame. We need to return to that guiding light of what led us all here to come to MIT to the first place.

What exactly is our guiding light? We don't have a statement of ethical principles nor a set of priorities that would state, for example, that we value human safety over technological advancement; or that we value inclusiveness of all humankind moving forward rather than a few representing mankind landing on the moon. These are debatable topics; the world is gray. Most of us think we know what "ethics" means but never lived through a tough decision nor had the empathy to try to understand the process by which leaders make their decisions. It is important that we guide these discussions so that students form and voice their thoughts, as this process is critical for building a corps of future leaders who will be facing the same decisions that Joi made. Dissenting opinions and hashing out real-world problems are critical to this process. After all, we can write down Maxwell's equations, but if we don't struggle with problem sets, build a circuit, and then blow it up by accident, how well do we really know them?

> **Dissenting opinions and hashing out real-world problems are critical to this process.**

To be human is to make mistakes. To be human is also to face it all with courage and openness, so we do better next time. Let's all make ourselves better people together.

At the end of the day, it is you, President Reif, who will give us the ultimate words of wisdom of what it means to be a member of the MIT community. We rely on you to inspire us, hold us accountable, and lead us.

Sincerely, Kim and Laureen

*Kimberly Jung and Laureen Meroueh are graduate students in MIT's department of mechanical engineering.*

"Won beautiful day their was an caterpillar sitting, under a tree try to clime up the bark. Unfortunately there was five clouds in the sky that starting to rain and the caterpillar couldnot find any food to eat"

The copy chief called.
She said this ain't it.

If this also pains you,
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ver.
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MAXWELL YUN —THE TECH

ETHAN SIT—THE TECH

ETHAN SIT—THE TECH

↑

## 4 a.m. sNAPshots →

↓

ETHAN SIT—THE TECH

ETHAN SIT—THE TECH

OpenCV Backend

ETHAN SIT—THE TECH

mail for a Gavel link

ETHAN SIT—THE TECH

SARAH CHIENG—THE TECH

ETHAN SIT—THE TECH

KEVIN CHEN—THE TECH

KEVIN CHEN—THE TECH

ETHAN SIT—THE TECH

# HACKMIT

One thousand students from around the world gathered in the Zesiger Center this weekend for HackMIT, MIT's annual hackathon. This year's theme, *Hack for a Reason*, saw hackers devising projects for social change with the aid of industry mentors.

MOVIE REVIEW

# *The Goldfinch* moves little more than a still picture

## The movie adaptation of Donna Tartt's Pulitzer Prize winning novel remains chained down by its length

★★☆☆☆

***The Goldfinch***

**Directed by John Crowley**

**Screenplay by Peter Straughan**

**Starring Ansel Elgort, Oakes Fegley, Finn Wolfhard, Nicole Kidman, Sarah Paulson**

**Rated R, Now Playing**

**By Liane Xu and Lulu Tian**

They say the book is always better. To be fair, there are probably a few exceptions, but this is definitely not one of them.

*The Goldfinch* opens with Theo Decker (Ansel Elgort), visibly anxious and depressed, in an Amsterdam hotel room. Years earlier, young Theo (Oakes Fegley) is visiting New York's Metropolitan Museum with his mother when a bomb explodes and kills her. Before Theo leaves the ruined museum, an old man grabs hold of him, cryptically tells him to take a painting called *The Goldfinch*, and hands him a ring to give to "Hobart and Blackwell" before dying. Unbeknownst to anybody else, Theo takes *The Goldfinch*. The rest of the movie tracks how Theo remains burdened by secrecy and trauma while dealing with an abusive father, an impossible love, and a drug addiction.

One of the few people who does care for Theo is Mrs. Barbour, played by Nicole Kidman, who appears at times to be simply copying and pasting her own performance as Celeste Wright from *Big Little Lies*. (On another note, Denis O'Hare, also in *Big Little Lies*, delivers an infuriatingly stunning performance here as Lucius Reeve, who suspects early on that Theo stole *The Goldfinch*.) Kidman's self-plagiarism is less apparent in the second half of the film when her character becomes more emotionally vulnerable, though it may also be due to her *SNL*-esque aging makeup that glares at the forefront. More than the makeup, though, it's the length of the movie — two-and-a-half hours — that drags her and the rest of the talented cast down.

It's not that long movies are necessarily bad. Alfonso Cuaron's masterpiece *Roma* ran over two hours, but its artistry leaves viewers in awe and makes it worth watching. Richard Linklater's *Boyhood* is even longer than *The Goldfinch*, but its unique premise and engaging yet relatable storyline marks it as one of the best movies of the 21st century. The problem with *The Goldfinch* is that it does not have enough redeeming qualities or any reason to be that long, so you're left wondering, "When is this going to end?"

On top of that, there's the problem that *The Goldfinch* tries to be too many things at once and fails at almost all of them. Nonetheless, one of the film's redeeming qualities is that its comedic bits work unexpectedly well, providing necessary relief from an often overly dramatic plotline. The prominent and jarring music during tense and emotional scenes, for instance, feels overbearing and greatly detracts from the movie.

The film also attempts to enhance its artistry by jumping back and forth to mimic memories; instead, it succeeds only at being confusing and losing a great part of the sentimentality of its source material. For instance, at the beginning of the novel, Theo mentions that *The Goldfinch* is his mother's favorite painting, lending it more emotional weight as he seeks to protect it. The movie, however, leaves this tidbit for the end, which doesn't help its already drab and uneven parts. That said, the film's ending does bring about some catharsis when all the clues that have been laid out mesh together. If not for the strange pacing of the movie, Theo's journey could have been more impactful.

On the other hand, thanks to Oscar-winning director of photography Roger Deakins, *The Goldfinch* does succeed at creating a visually emotional experience with skillful cinematography. Something about the way monochromatic shots of gray rubble blend with young Theo's jacket is incredibly unsettling, while the widespread use of blue tones in the Barbours' home distinguishes it from the rest of Theo's world. Close-ups on young Theo's face reveal Fegley's acting chops as he unfailingly captures Theo's rollercoaster of emotions. Unfortunately, however, this aesthetic satisfaction is not enough to save the movie as a whole.

Ultimately, *The Goldfinch* has trouble giving its celebrated story and skilled cast the direction that they are capable of. You may be better off rereading the book than sitting through these two and a half hours.

*LIOR HIRSCHFELD—THE TECH*

**Nicole Kidman and Ansel Elgort star** as Mrs. Barbour and Theo Decker, respectively, in *The Goldfinch.*

MOVIE REVIEW

# *Ad Astra*: Into the stars but not interstellar

## *Ad Astra* delves into the psychological implications of deep space travel and presents a plausible future for space travel

★★★☆☆

***Ad Astra***

**Directed by James Gray**

**Screenplay by James Gray & Ethan Gross**

**Starring Brad Pitt, Tommy Lee Jones, Ruth Negga, Liv Tyler, and Donald Sutherland**

**Rated PG-13, Now Playing**

**By Vedang Lad**

When it comes to space movies the bar is set high. With blockbuster hits such as Interstellar, Gravity, and the Martian just within the past six years, it seems that every top tier actor wants their own space movie. While Brad Pitt attempts to present a similar story of survival in deep space, viewers may be left disappointed with a storyline that is not up to par with the big names in sci-fi cinema. The two-hour film consists of jaw-dropping sounds and visuals but a shallow storyline, leaving only those with an appreciation of cinematography pleased. Director James Grey with *Ad Astra* presents what space travel will look like in the near future which leaves viewers excited about the science of space travel, but not necessarily the film.

*Ad Astra* follows the story of Roy McBride (Brad Pitt), a member of the Space division in the US Air Force. McBride is the son of a world famous astronaut who presumably lost his life near planet Neptune in search of extraterrestrial life in deep space.

*FRANCOIS DUHAMEL/TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX*

**Brad Pitt stars as Roy McBride** in *Ad Astra.*

After McBride almost loses his life due to a mysterious power surge upon the "International Space Tower," McBride learns that his father may be the cause of these mysterious power surges, and he may not be the man history remembers him as.

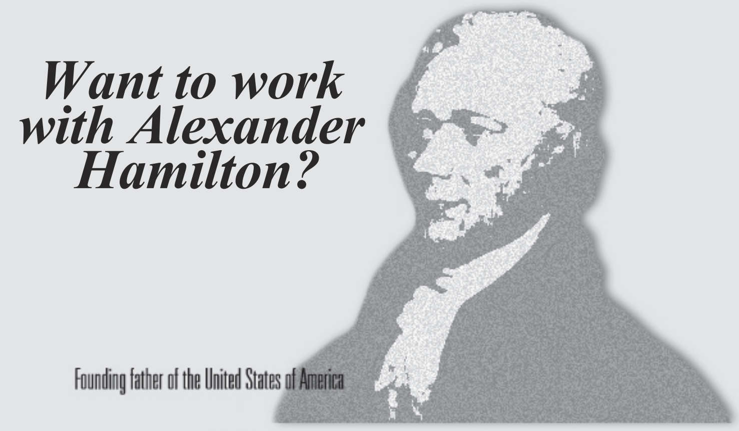
Throughout the movie, McBride is shown to be in constant battle with himself, attempting to cope with childhood trauma of losing his father and dealing with dangers of being an astronaut. The film narrates McBride's inner dialogue, which is redundant and overdramatized in afashion that leaves viewers bored and longing for something new. Being unable to find closure with his father's death prevents McBride from forming other relationships and leaves him alone to his thoughts. As McBride goes against all odds to journey into space to see his father one more time, the film accurately characterizes the bond between a parent and a child and how far we are willing to go for those that we love.

For those who are uninterested in learning about McBride's emotional trauma, they can always watch the movie for its breathtaking visuals and sounds. Throughout the film, viewers will free fall from the edge of the atmosphere, then journey to the moon, Mars, and even all the way to Neptune. Other visuals include, but are not limited to, a battle with space pirates and commercial "flights" to bases on the moon and Mars. In Gray's words from a 2017 interview with *Collider*, *Ad Astra* is "the most realistic depiction of space travel that's been put in a movie and to basically say, 'Space is awfully hostile to us.'"

Unfortunately, the irony resides in the fact that the film intends to provide realistic depictions of space, but it is also littered with purposeless scenes that leave viewers asking, "Why?" A vast majority of the movie consists of slow-moving dialogue that attempts to build-up to a nonexistent climax. It is not a question of Brad Pitt's acting, but one of a plot which failed to deliver due to a lacking screenplay.

While this may not be the next space movie you were looking for, it is certainly a joyride that takes you out of your seat and into the unknown.

*Want to work with Alexander Hamilton?*



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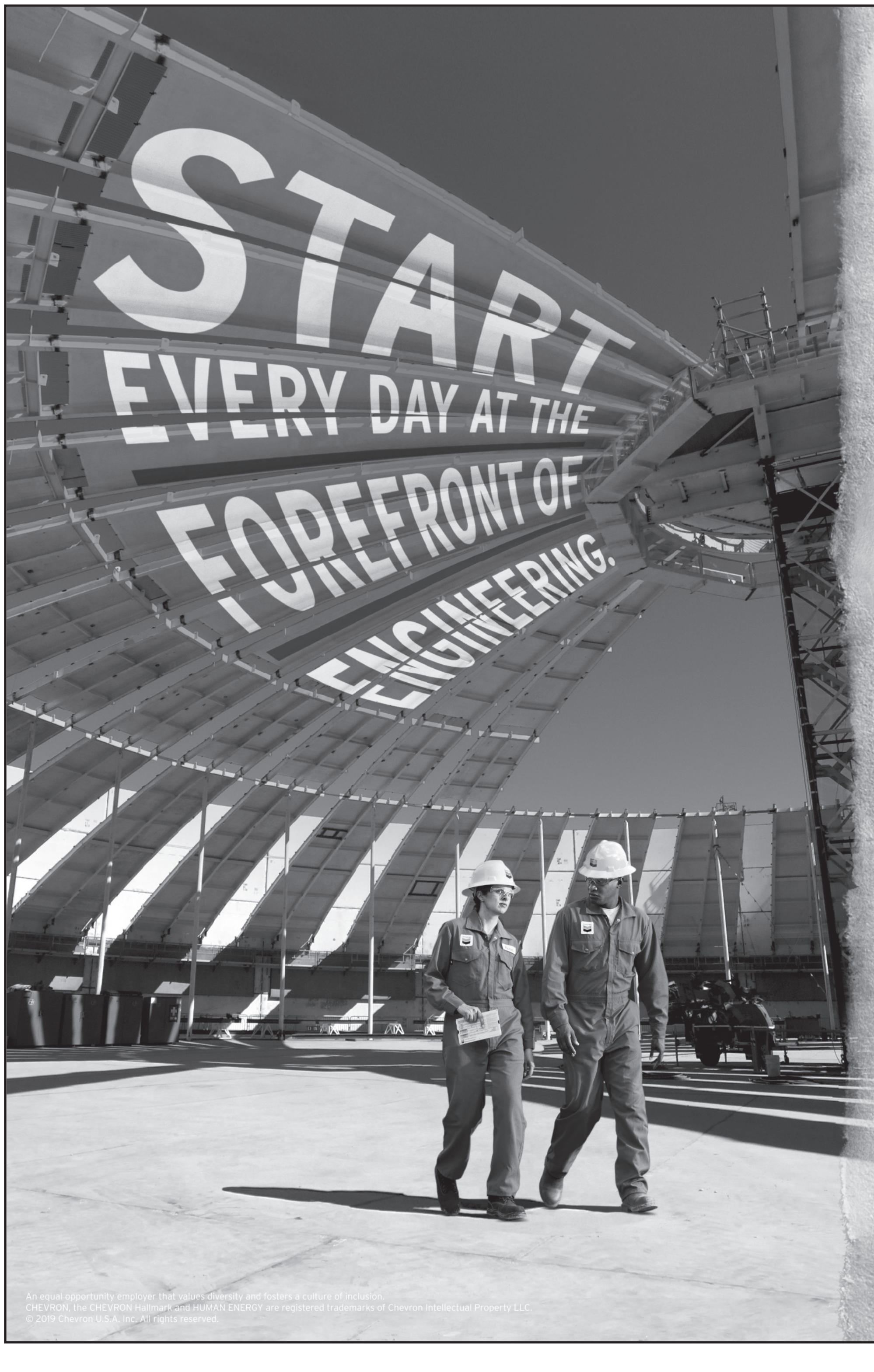

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# HackMIT

Solution, page 14

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1 | 6 | | 5 | | 9 |
| | | | | | | | | 4 |
| 9 | | | | 2 | 7 | 1 | | 8 |
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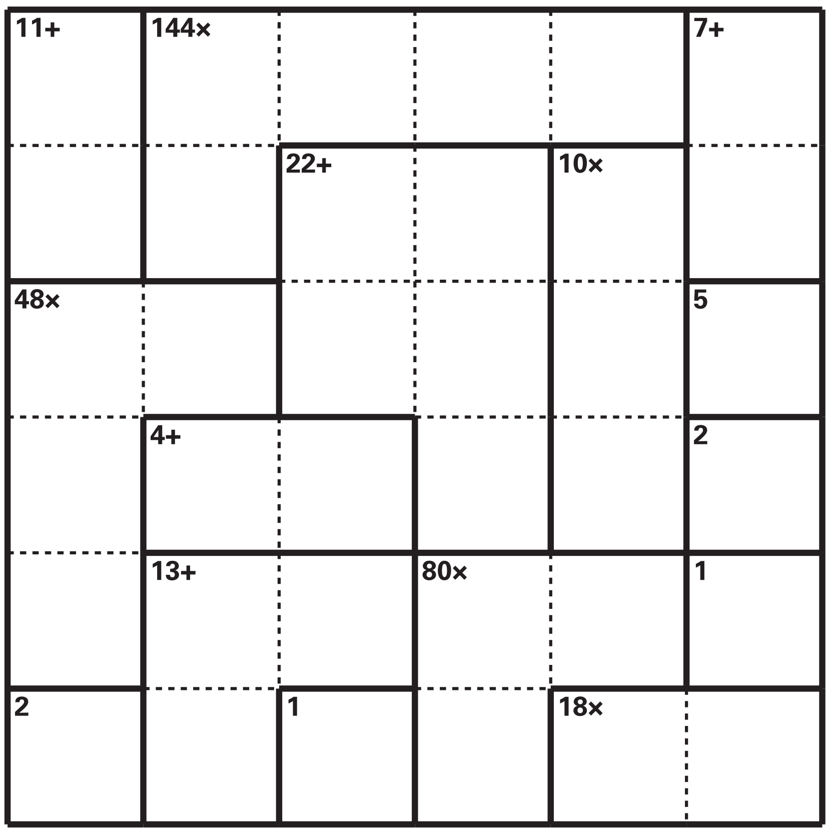
| 6 | | | | | | 9 | | 5 |
| 4 | | 6 | 8 | 1 | | | | 3 |
| 2 | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | 9 | | 5 | 2 | | | |

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

# Career Fair

Solution, page 14


11+
144×
7+
22+
10×
48×
5
4+
2
13+
80×
1
2
1
18×

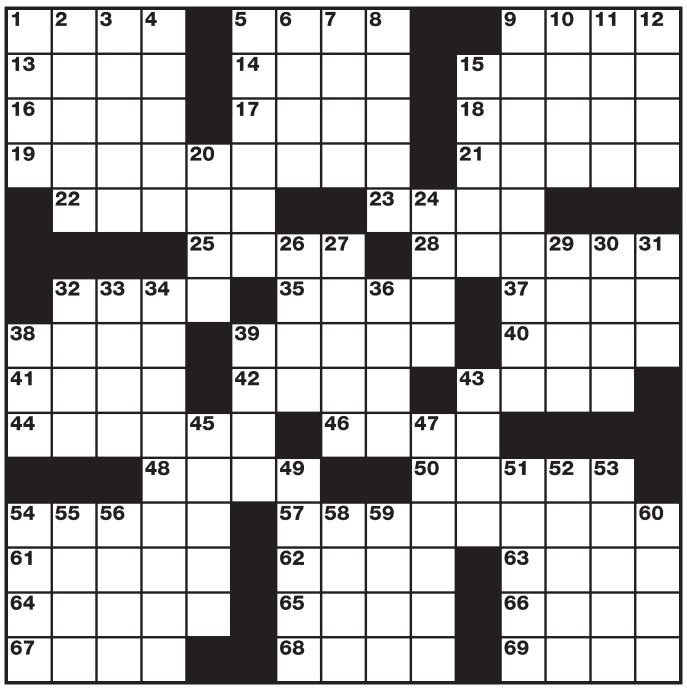
Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

## What's Our Line by Brad Wilber

Solution, page 14

**ACROSS**
1 Bread with a pocket
5 Chowder morsel
9 Browse for bargains
13 Corrosive chemical
14 Enormous
15 Type of glove leather
16 Orange peel
17 __ out a living (gets by)
18 Mistake
19 Drivers on railroad lines
21 Avoid, as a crisis
22 Heredity carriers
23 Connecticut Ivy League school
25 Modern phone, for short
28 What the ego and id are part of
32 Boulder
35 Office assistant
37 Mine extractions
38 Person saving the day
39 Bills picturing Lincoln
40 Frolic
41 Garden of Eden man
42 Vicinity
43 Nile snakes
44 Serious, as a church service
46 Reduce one's speed
48 Classroom furniture
50 Has a change of address
54 Up and about
57 Writers of book-length story lines
61 With no clouds in the sky
62 Wicked
63 And others: Abbr.
64 Tending to drip
65 Make simpler
66 "Those __ the days"
67 Caregivers on ambulances: Abbr.
68 Venetian blind piece
69 Bird feeder food

**DOWN**
1 Remove the peel from
2 Cupcake topping
3 Trace of color
4 Give as a bonus
5 Cheddar or parmesan
6 Skywalker of Star Wars
7 Golden-__ (senior citizen)
8 Untidy
9 People who mark property lines
10 Attendance-taking response
11 Aroma
12 Full of sass
15 Closes with glue
20 Thin part of a bottle
24 Gorillas and chimps
26 Wild animal's home
27 Exists
29 Any farm harvest
30 Skirt edges
31 Sixth sense, for short
32 Decorate differently
33 Word-of-mouth
34 People delivering punch lines
36 Pass out playing cards
38 Owns
39 Ceiling-mounted room coolers
43 Army truant: Abbr.
45 __-go-round
47 Brunch egg dish
49 Leg joints
51 Scenic sites

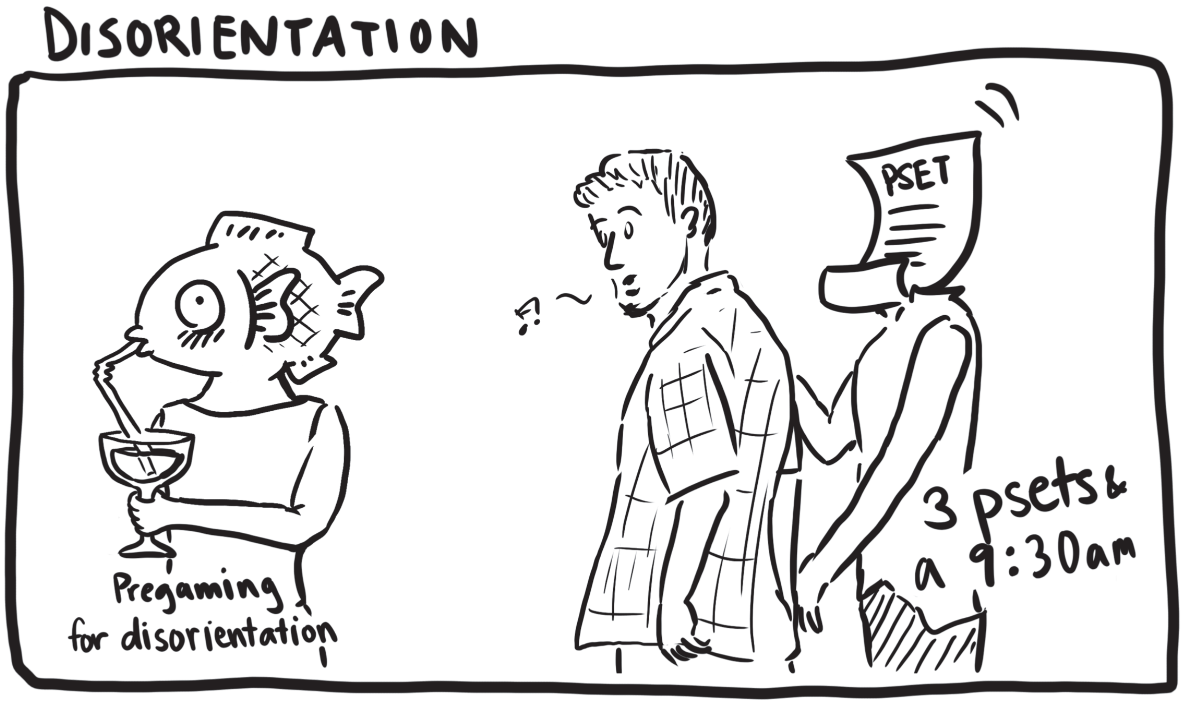

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15
16 17 18
19 20 21
22 23 24
25 26 27 28 29 30 31
32 33 34 35 36 37
38 39 40
41 42 43
44 45 46 47
48 49 50 51 52 53
54 55 56 57 58 59 60
61 62 63
64 65 66
67 68 69

52 Lauder of cosmetics
53 Unblinking look
54 Farmland measure
55 Run-down neighborhood
56 Camper's canvas shelter
58 Roundish shape
59 Border-crossing document
60 Snow-gliding vehicle

# ihtfp

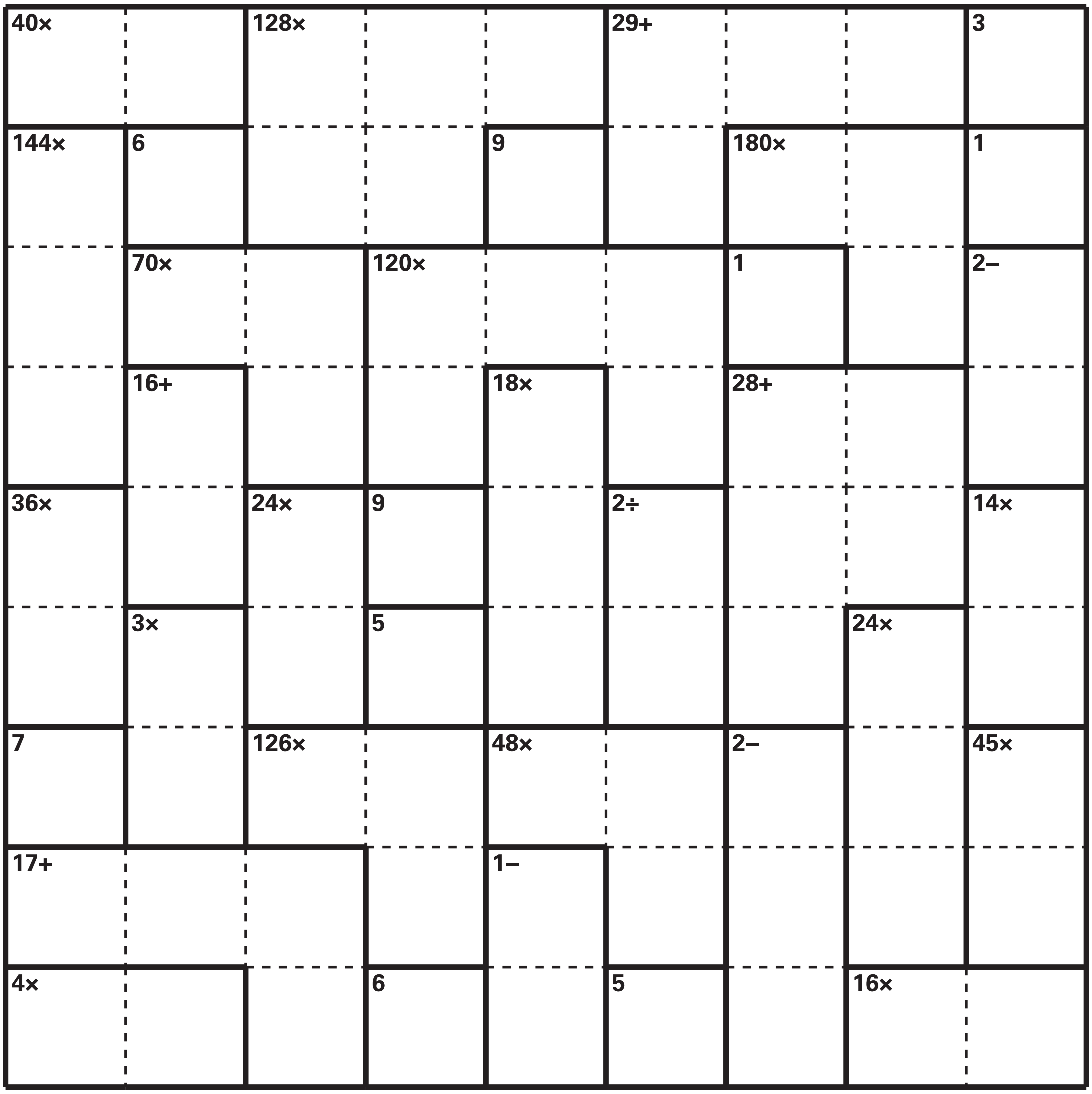
by Jaeho Kim '20

a comic about life at 'tvte


DISORIENTATION
Pregaming for disorientation
?! ~
PSET
3 psets & a 9:30am

# Scandal

Solution, page 14


40×
128×
29+
3
144×
6
9
180×
1
70×
120×
1
2–
16+
18×
28+
36×
24×
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2÷
14×
3×
5
24×
7
126×
48×
2–
45×
17+
1–
4×
6
5
16×

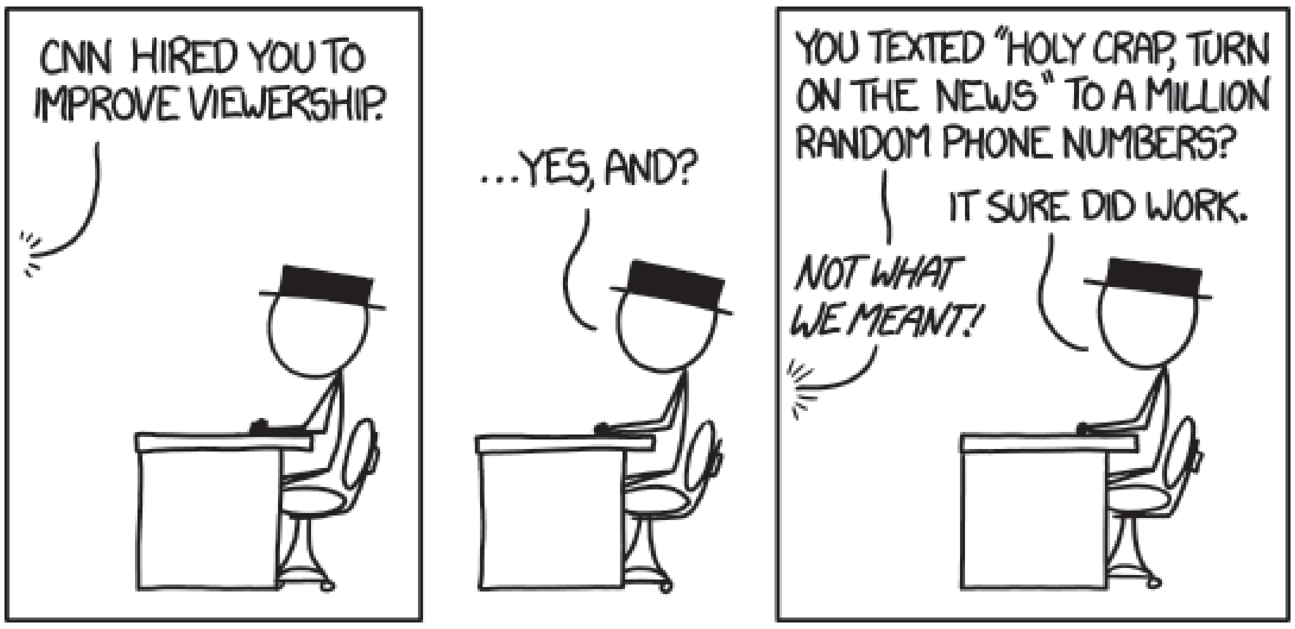
Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–9. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

## [1327] Mobile Marketing

xkcd

A webcomic of romance, sarcasm, math, and language

by Randall Munroe


CNN HIRED YOU TO IMPROVE VIEWERSHIP.
...YES, AND?
YOU TEXTED "HOLY CRAP, TURN ON THE NEWS" TO A MILLION RANDOM PHONE NUMBERS?
NOT WHAT WE MEANT!
IT SURE DID WORK.

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MIT-Greater China Connections
去中国实习 MISTI
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Companies, Research Institutes, & MIT-CETI
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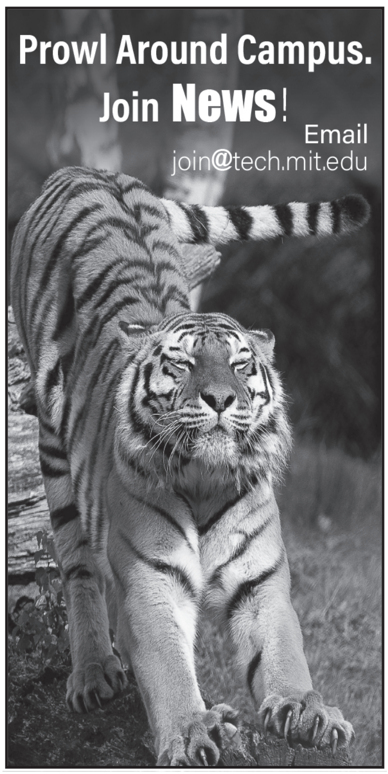
Food Provided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MIT Global Education

## Solution to HackMIT

*from page 12*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 9 |
| 5 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 4 |
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| 6 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 5 |
| 4 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| 2 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 6 |

## Solution to Career Fair

*from page 12*

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| 6 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| 1 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 4 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 6 |

## Solution to What's

*from page 12*

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| E | N | G | I | N | E | E | R | S | ■ | A | V | E | R | T |
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| E | M | T | S | ■ | ■ | S | L | A | T | ■ | S | E | E | D |

## Solution to Scandal

*from page 13*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 3 |
| 3 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 8 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 6 |
| 6 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 4 |
| 4 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| 9 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| 7 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 5 |
| 2 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 9 |
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 |

Are you a tetris ninja?
Use your powers for good!
arts arts arts
arts arts arts
arts arts arts
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...by joining the production department at The Tech!
join@tech.mit.edu
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life life life fun fun fun

# Deputy Executive Vice President Tony Sharon to retire

## *Sharon advises students to ‘learn how to learn’*

**By Suleman Thaniana**

Deputy Executive Vice President Tony Sharon will retire from MIT at the end of this year. Prior to spending six years in his current position, he served as a researcher and administrator in the Lincoln Laboratories for 14 years.

In an interview with *The Tech*, Sharon said his job involved running “all of the central administration HR, IT, finance, facilities, MIT medical, police, … the day to day operations. [I made decisions] on any of the above offices or where all the above offices need to come together to support faculty or students.”

Even though Sharon’s position doesn’t make him visible to the student body, he takes care of vital jobs such as fixing the heating systems, plumbing, and support structures for buildings. He has also played a role in overseeing the construction of the New Vassar dormitory and upgrading the MIT Central Utilities Plant to improve efficiency and reduce emissions.

A major part of Sharon’s work has been formulating and running the MIT2030 framework. The framework, drafted in 2015, provides a capital plan to budget $5.2 billion for new construction, renewals, and upgrades on campus.

Sharon said, “When you get five billion dollars, we should have something more than just buildings: having a dedicated staff that can care for the buildings once built is also important.”

A mechanical engineer by profession, Sharon said he loves his conversations with faculty when redoing laboratories. “Whenever my team plans to redo a lab for faculty, they explain to me what they are doing and why they are doing it … which is a great treat.” He said that this is a part of MIT he will miss after retirement.

*The Tech* asked how fun life at MIT was out of 10. Sharon answered, “It was cyclical, but if I integrate over the curve I would say eight.” He added, “I wouldn’t have kept coming back if it was not fun.”

Sharon said a rewarding part of his job was the satisfaction he gained by working for students, different from his previous work at the Lincoln Laboratories where there were only researchers. He also said he believes the balance between research and education at MIT to be very unique and something students should leverage highly.

Lastly, Sharon gave advice to students: “Faculty challenge you; you should challenge the faculty.” He also encouraged young adults to “learn how to learn, because two thirds of the jobs won’t exist once you get to my age.”

# MacGregor, New House most popular dorms to move in for FYRE

## *East Campus had most move-out requests*

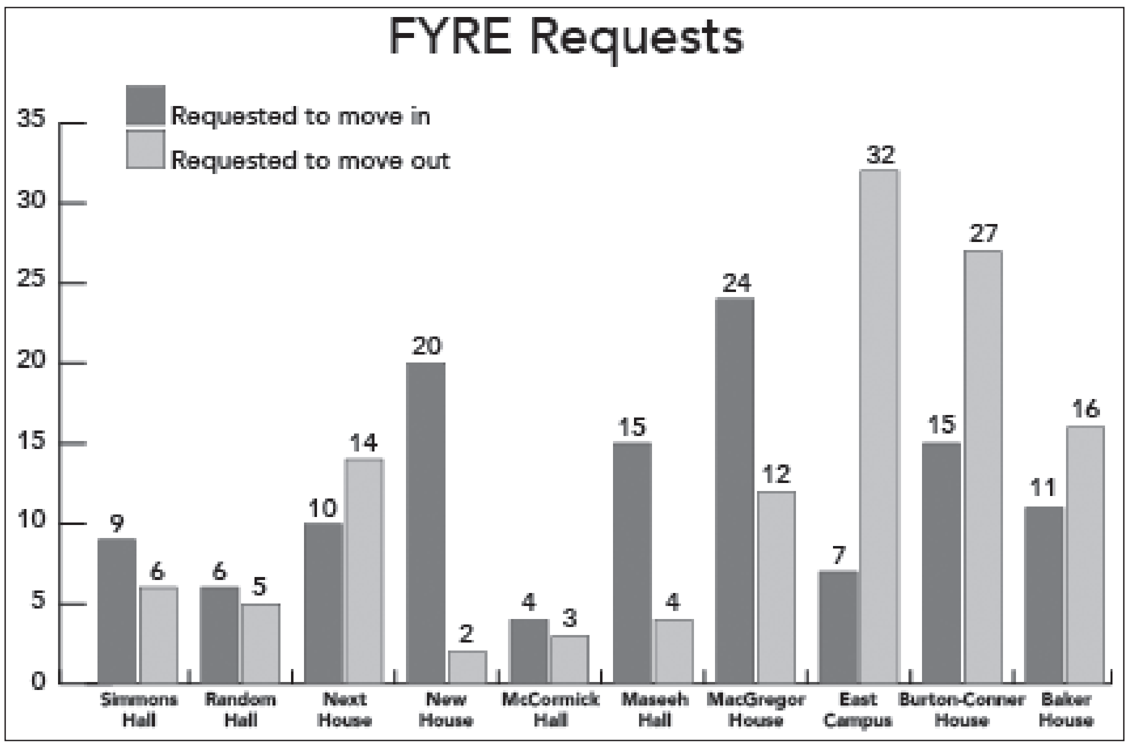
**By Aliza Rabinovitz**

MacGregor and New House overtook Simmons and Maseeh to become the most popular dorms to move into during this year’s First Year Residence Exchange (FYRE). The dorms with the most requests to move out were East Campus and Burton Conner.

The number of students who entered the FYRE lottery was comparable to previous years, but this year had the lowest ratio of people who moved out to people who moved in since 2016 — 58 to 121.

In an email to The Tech, Director of Residential Services Jennifer Hapgood-White wrote that the low ratio was due to a number of reasons. One potential reason is that a high number of students requested to move into dorms that didn’t have an equally high number of students looking to move out, according to Hapgood-White. For example, while New House had one of the highest numbers of requests to move in, it also had the lowest number of requests to move out.

“A student’s decision where to live or whether to move from one residential community to another is personal, which makes identifying potential influences on students’ decision-making in any given year difficult,” Hapgood-White said.



*Arun Wongprommoon—The Tech*

**MacGregor and New House had the most requests to move in,** at 24 and 20, respectively. East Campus and Burton Conner had the most requests to move out, at 32 and 27, respectively.

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Developing a Moral Budget for MA | 2:00pm
Housing, Transit, Infrastructure & Energy | 3:00pm
Education & Health | 4:00pm
Cutting the Pentagon Budget | 4:45pm
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